

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 15474 141200Z

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USIAC

FOR IEA AND ICS/D, CINCPAC FOR USIA ADVISOR, STATE FOR CU/EA

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS -- JULY 8 - 14, 1977

1. FEUD WITH PRESS CONTINUES:

PRESS AND GOVERNMENT APPEARED ON COLLISION COURSE WHEN THE GOVERNMENT CALLED A JULY 14 "SEMINAR" FOR NEWSPAPER REPRESENTATIVES AND OFFICIALS. SOME SOURCES SUBSEQUENTLY STATED FORMER PRIME MINISTER KUKRIT PRAMOJ, OWNER OF AND POPULAR COLUMNIST IN THE PRESTIGIOUS DAILY SIAM RATH, WOULD LEAD JOURNALIST ASSOCIATION DELEGATIONS ATTENDING THE MEETING IN A DEMAND FOR RELAXATION OF GOVERNMENT PRESS RESTRICTIONS. ONE SOURCE SAID KUKRIT WILL LEAD A WALK-OUT IF THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT AGREE. NEWSMEN THREATENED TO BOYCOTT THE SEMINAR IN PROTEST OVER GOVERNMENT CLOSURE OF MASS-CIRCULATION SIANG PUANG CHON FOR REPORTING THE RETURN OF NARONG KITTIKACHORN FROM GERMANY. UNDER THIS PRESSURE, THE GOVERNMENT ALLOWED THE DAILY TO RE-OPEN. SIANG PUANG CHON'S FIRST EDITION WAS ALREADY BEING DISTRIBUTED WITH THE REPORT BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT CONTACTED ALL PAPERS TELLING THEM NOT TO CARRY THE STORY.

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2. NEW GOVERNMENT PAPER BEGINS JULY 15:

THE GOVERNMENT IS PROMOTING ITS NEW DAILY, SCHEDULED TO OPEN JULY 15 WITH AN INITIAL RUN OF 80,000 COPIES, AS "A NEW STANDARD OF PRESENTING INFORMATION, ARTICLES AND FEATURE STORIES IN A CONSTRUCTIVE AND SOCIAL VALUE-BOOSTING FASHION". IN HIS DAILY SIAM RATH COLUMN, FORMER PRIME MINISTER KUKRIT PRAMOJ NOTED JULY 1 THAT THE TITLE OF THE GOVERNMENT PAPER, "CHAO PHYA," WAS BOTH A TITLE

CONFERRED BY FORMER KINGS ON GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND THE NAME OF THE RIVER RUNNING THROUGH BANGKOK. "I HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING," SAID KUKRIT, "WHETHER THE CHAO PHYA MASTHEAD ... WOULD MEAN THE ... RIVER, WHICH IS EVER MORE POLLUTED, OR FEUDALISM." THE WEEKLY THAILAND BUSINESS JOURNAL NOTED THAT GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER EXIST ONLY IN NON-DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES AND QUESTIONED THE PROPRIETY OF USING PUBLIC FUNDS TO COMPLETE WITH PRIVATE PAPERS.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMENTS:

PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY CONTINUES TO PROVIDE A CONVENIENT PEG ON WHICH TO HANG LOCAL PRESS CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT. SEE, FOR EXAMPLE, BANGKOK 14908, 15078, 15137 AND 15318.

4. CHINESE REJECT CARTER STATEMENT ON TAIWAN: POST MADE ROUTINE DISTRIBUTION TO PRC EMBASSY OF MIMEOGRAPHED COPY OF WIRELESS FILE SUMMARY AND TEXT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S JUNE 30 NEWS CONFERENCE (EPF-50, JUNE 30). COPY WAS MAILED BACK TO USIS JULY 13 IN PRC EMBASSY ENVELOPE WITH ALL BUT THE FIRST TWO WORDS OF THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE UNDERLINED IN RED: "THE PRESIDENT EXPRESSED HOPE SOME WAY CAN BE FOUND TO ESTABLISH FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH PEKING WHILE MAINTAINING SOME SORT OF RELATIONSHIP WITH TAIPEI, 'AND MAKE SURE THAT THE PEACEFUL LIVES OF THE TAIWANESE, THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA, IS MAINTAINED'"

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5. AILEY DANCERS PERFORM TWICE:

INTENSIVE POST PROMOTION PRODUCED FULL-HOUSE AUDIENCES FOR BOTH SCHEDULED JULY 11 PERFORMANCES OF THE ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER. OVER 1200 STUDENTS FROM BANGKOK UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER SCHOOLS FILLED THE NATIONAL THEATER FOR THE MATINEE. ALTHOUGH MODERN DANCE WAS NEW TO MOST OF THIS AUDIENCE, THE STUDENTS WERE ENTHUSIASTIC AND RECEPTIVE. FOUR HOURS LATER, THE TIRELESS AILEY DANCERS PERFORMED BEFORE ANOTHER CAPACITY CROWD THAT INCLUDED TWO ROYAL PRINCESSES, THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR, THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND SENIOR OFFICIALS FROM FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND OTHER MINISTRIES. LAST-MINUTE ILLNESS AND INJURY PREVENTED DANCERS JAMISON AND CHAYA FROM PERFORMING IN THE EVENING BUT INHIBITED NEITHER THE QUALITY OF THE AILEY PERFORMANCE NOR THE APPRECIATION OF THE AUDIENCE. AILEY MANAGEMENT, DANCERS AND TECHNICIANS WERE PLEASANT AND COOPERATIVE DESPITE AIRLINE MIS-HANDLING OF CARGO AND A LATE NIGHT ARRIVAL DELAYED FIVE HOURS. BOTH ESCORT OFFICER AND COMPANY MANAGER EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR HOSPITABLE BANGKOK RECEPTION, WHICH INCLUDED INFORMAL LUNCHEON HOSTED FOR TROUPE BY AMBASSADOR, AND POST HANDLING OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND LOGISTICAL DETAILS. THE AILEY VISIT RECEIVED HEAVY MEDIA CONVERAGE, AND SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS HAVE PROMISED REVIEWS.

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Message Attributes

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